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ABSTRACT

This review of the status of English language instruction in Finland provides an overview of the role of English in the Finnish society in general and outlines the status of English use and instruction in the educational system at all levels (preprimary, elementary, secondary, higher, vocational, adult, and teacher education). Topics covered include: the characteristics and training of English language instructors, the type and availability of instructional materials, educational administration and planning in relation to English teaching, English instruction outside the educational system, British and other international support, commercial opportunities related to English instruction, creative writing, language research, and other sources of information. The educational reforms of recent years have caused some problems and crises of confidence among teachers, but The current attitude seems to be positive and receptive to new educational ideas. (MSE)

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ENGLISH TEACHING PROFILE

Country: Finland

Date: January 1986

1. ROLE AND STATUS OF ENGLISH

Finland has two official languages, Finnish (93.6% of the population) and Swedish (6.2%). Both languages are afforded equal status by the constitution and are compulsory subjects for all pupils in the basic school. In addition to these two national languages, English, German, Russian and French are considered to be of particular cultural and economic importance. There is also some interest in Spanish.

In the 1930s German was, almost without exception, the first foreign language. From 1945, however, English gradually replaced it at all levels of the educational system so that in 1962 the percentages of pupils studying English and German were 56.9% and 42.6%, respectively, while corresponding figures in 1970 were 78.9% and 20.2%.

By 1984, these figures stood at 90.7 to 8.4% and the position of English had become so dominant that a special Language Programme Committee was appointed by the Cabinet to investigate the extent to which both foreign and national languages should be taught and to outline a plan ensuring adequate provision for their teaching. The Committee issued its report in 1979 and stressed the need to aim for a better balance among the various languages.

Although there have been several administrative measures intended to reduce the number of pupils opting for English, it has nevertheless remained by far the most popular A-language (or first foreign language started in the third year of basic schooling). In 1984, for example, 86.8% of pupils were studying English as their A-language as opposed to German (0.9%), Russian (0.5%) and French (0.3%). The aim, however, is to reduce the percentage for English as the first foreign language still further to 81.5% by the 1991/92 academic year with corresponding increases in German (2.0%), Russian (1.5%) and French (1.5%).

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Although English is not a general medium of instruction in Finland, a large amount of assigned reading material in almost all subject areas at the tertiary level is in English. Outside the education sector, English is considered the language of international communication and overseas commercial transactions are to a large extent carried out in English. The main Swedish language newspaper printed in Helsinki, Hufvudstadsbladet, carries a daily column in English during the summer months and this practice is also followed by several of the regional newspapers such as Aamulehti. There are also weekly articles in English in Savon Sanomat but these are of a very general nature and dependent on the skills of the local Finnish-British Society teacher. The Finnish Business Review, on the other hand, is a high-standard professional weekly for the international business community with an interest in Finnish affairs and two other major publications, Books From Finland and Look At Finland, are printed in English. Blue Wings, the in-flight magazine of Finn Air, numerous government and ministerial publications and the annual reports of many Finnish banks and industrial organizations are also prepared in English for the international market.

Bookshops in all the main towns stock English language titles and there is no shortage of English newspapers and specialist magazines, at least in Helsinki. Films are shown with subtitled translations and Cable Television and Sky Channel provide daily English language programmes. In recent months there has also been a steady increase in quite sophisticated English language advertising on the assumption presumably that potential clients and customers can understand the connotations. One of the main banks, for example, has been promoting its credit card facilities under the motto 'No money, no honey, no fun!'.

2. ENGLISH WITHIN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Pre-primary level

At the pre-primary level there are no English-medium kindergartens supported by the state. There are, however, several private establishments around the country describing themselves as English-language kindergartens and employing young native-speakers on short-term contracts. It is not known how effective most of these centres are but they are at least a reflection of local demand and interest. Within Helsinki, pre-primary care through the medium of English is offered by the Finnish-American Society, the English School and the International Playschool but this involves no more than one hundred children. Some Finnish families send their children to the local English-medium International School for the first two years of the school programme from age five to seven. The children then transfer to the first year of the normal Finnish system. This is, however, a relatively expensive option and covers only a handful of children in any one academic year.

Primary level

Normal school education starts at age seven and is provided in the so-called basic schools over a nine-year period divided into a six-year lower level and a three-year upper level.

The first compulsory foreign language course starts in year three (age nine). This is referred to as the A-language and is taught for two class hours of 45 minutes each in years three to six of the lower level. In year seven, the first year of the upper level, there are again two hours a week, followed by three hours a week in year eight and two hours a week in year nine. As

already stated above, 86.6% were studying English as their A-language in 1984 from a total of 429,545 pupils in years three to nine of the basic school.

Secondary level

The second compulsory language course starts in year seven, (age thirteen). This is referred to as the B-language and is studied for three hours a week in each of the three years of the upper level basic school. In 1984, 11% chose English as their B-language from a total of 185,832 pupils in years seven to nine of the basic school.

A third optional language can be taken from year eight, age fourteen. This is referred to as the C-language, with two hours a week in year eight and three hours a week in year nine. In 1984, 3.8% (1,609 pupils) chose English as their C-language from a total of 42,141 pupils opting for a third language in years eight and nine of the basic school.

A numerus clausus system regulates entry to the three years of upper secondary education and only about 50% of pupils leaving the basic school in any one year are accepted. Studies are based on a unit credit system with subject areas divided into modular units of 38 hours each. Studies are concentrated and it is possible to complete a module in about six weeks.

A-languages are continued with eight units: three in year one, three in year two, and two in year three. In 1984, 97% (34,531 pupils) studied English as their A-language in the first year of the upper secondary school.

B-languages are continued with seven units: two in year one, three in year two, and two in year three. In 1984, 4.7% (1,672 pupils) studied English as their B-language in the first year of the upper secondary school.

C-languages are also continued with seven units: three in year one and two each in years two and three. In 1984, 2.1% (759 pupils) studied English as their C-language in the first year of the upper secondary school.

It is also possible to start an additional language in the first year of the upper secondary school and this is referred to as a D-language. Eight units are the study requirement, three in each of the first two years and one in the third year. In 1984, 0.2% (88 pupils) studied English as their D-language in the first year of the upper secondary school.

During the summer months several summer schools are organized throughout the country and attended not only by pupils from the upper secondary school but also by pupils from forms seven to nine of the basic school and even adults. Foreign languages are very popular and can be followed either as a minor subject for two to three hours a day or as major subject for four hours a day. In some courses the total number of hours can reach sixty. Since the number of hours is so high, pupils can concentrate on reviewing and developing what they have learned on their normal school courses. At four of the schools the emphasis is on the acquisition and development of communicative skills.

Tertiary Level

On leaving the upper secondary school, pupils receive a school-leaving certificate and a matriculation certificate provided they obtain passing grades in the examinations. The principle of numerus clausus operates for entry into university level education and only about 40% of upper secondary school graduates gain admission to this sector. The remainder either transfer to vocational institutions or start work. The matriculation examination for English includes both listening and reading comprehension, a structural test

and the writing of an essay. The examination has suffered a lot of criticism in recent years and the listening comprehension tape used at the end of the 1984/85 academic year caused particular concern in that both the speed of the recording and the difficulty level were thought to be unsatisfactory. Debate among language teachers on this topic has been extensive and hopefully there will be some change of direction in the years ahead.

Only Finnish qualifications carry official recognition and so there is little motivation to work towards non-Finnish qualifications in foreign languages. There are, however, some candidates for certain English language examinations.

The Helsinki Finnish-British Society is the main centre for the Cambridge examinations at First Certificate (FCE) and Proficiency Level (CPE) with occasional Diploma candidates as well. In June 1985 there were 134 candidates for FCE and 28 for CPE with pass rates of 85% and 75% respectively. In December 1985, corresponding entries for FCE and CPE were 131 and 28 with no results available at the time of writing.

A second Cambridge centre came into operation in the 1984/85 academic year arranged by the English Club of Oulu in the north-west of the country. Of the 24 candidates entered for FCE in June 1985, there were 22 passes, several with grade A.

The Finnish-British Society in Rauma on the south-west coast enters small groups of students for the ARELS examinations and there have been occasional expressions of interest in other regions too but so far without any firm follow-up.

There are also occasional private candidates for the Ordinary Level English Language paper set by the University of London but these are generally the children of mixed-nationality marriages where there is some possibility that the family will return to Britain and the need for a British qualification.

Facilities for the English Language Testing Service (ELTS) are available from the British Council on request.

University level

At the tertiary level the degree system is based on a system of unit credits, each one composed of some 40 hours of work towards certain set objectives. A basic degree programme usually consists of 160 credit units but this is extended to 180 units for those students wishing to graduate as subject teachers. The Universities of Helsinki, Joensuu, Jyväskylä, Oulu, Tampere, and Turku as well as Abo Akademi, the Swedish-language university in Turku, offer degree programmes in English; degree qualifications in translation studies with English as the main language can also be taken at the Departments of Translation Studies in Kouvola, Savonlinna, Tampere, and Turku. Each university offers a programme differing in both structure and content.

The language proficiency requirements of Finnish universities demand that graduates have a sufficient knowledge of the second national language and one or two foreign languages as well depending on the field of study. The choice of foreign language(s) is made from English, French, German, Russian and Spanish. To enable students to meet these demands, each university has a language centre in theory offering specially designed courses for each faculty and discipline. The University of Helsinki, for example, has some fifty full-time teachers and with another fifty part-time teachers and administrative personnel provides about 28,000 hours of tuition a year. The vast majority

of those hours are devoted to English. Based in Jyväskylä there is also a national co-ordinating body, The Language Centre for Finnish Universities, which is not involved in teaching but produces materials and carries out research into the teaching at university centres.

Summer universities are held in some sixty locations throughout the country in the holiday months of June, July and August and can claim an annual attendance rate of about 50,000. Courses in foreign languages are very popular and in 1983 there were 200 courses in more than twenty languages with 3,700 participants. Again English is in considerable demand. In 1983 and in 1985 the University of Tampere organized seminars on CALL (Computer Applications in Language Learning) as part of the summer university programme and in 1985 the University of Helsinki supported a seminar for writers of language textbooks, so it is clear that scope for variety exists.

Vocational education

Vocational education has been under reform since 1982 and the process will not be completed until 1988. All vocational education is being arranged into twenty-five basic lines containing about 250 courses of specialization. There are two types of vocational institution, namely schools and institutes; the former provide training in skilled manual work while the latter are designed to prepare students for managerial tasks. Entry to either kind of institution is generally, but not solely, on completion of the basic school. Courses last from one to five years and the first year comprises a period of general education including the study of one foreign language. After the first year, further study of a foreign language becomes optional in vocational schools but remains compulsory in the institutes. The National Board of Vocational Education provides guidelines on the hourly distribution of study in the basic branches and there is considerable diversity. By way of example, however, students of hotel and restaurant administration on a three-year course take 60 hours of English in year one and 80 hours in year two. Although these do not amount to long periods of study, in 1983 there were 80,843 students in vocational institutions and English was and is the language most generally chosen.

Adult education

The structure of adult education is complex but the main forms are outlined below:

There are 277 Adult Education Centres, known until 1979 as Civic and Workers Institutes. In 1982-83, these offered some 1.8 million hours of instruction in a wider range of subjects. Approximately 300,000 of these hours were devoted to the teaching of twenty-seven languages, with English being the most popular and accounting for 42% of the total or 126,000 hours. The next most popular language was Russian (11% and taught in 217 institutes), followed by German (9%), French (8.2%), Spanish (5.5%) and Italian (3.7%). Other languages on offer included Arabic, Chinese, Esperanto, Estonian, Greek, Hungarian and Japanese.

The adult education system also includes a network of evening secondary schools, parallel with the day-time system. These were attended in 1984 by 4,311 students at the lower level and 9,259 at the upper level, a total of 13,570 students. The students sit the same examinations as the day pupils and, if successful, have the same rights of entry to higher education. The two levels consist of three years each and a unit credit system is operated in both levels along the same lines as in the daytime upper secondary school. Modules, however, are shorter consisting of only 24 hours of study as opposed

to 38 hours in the main system. At the lower level, ten units are the basic requirement for the A-language (usually English) started in the first year and supplemented with a further eight units at the upper level.

Finland also has eighty-nine Folk High Schools offering adults an opportunity to improve their basic education with full-time learning under boarding-school conditions. These schools are entitled to give a formal certificate corresponding to the leaving certificate of the basic school. They also teach separate courses in subjects taken from the general education programme, with the greatest interest being in Finnish, foreign languages and mathematics. In 1982-83, 6,944 students attended such courses arranged in twelve-week study blocks and 32,509 students attended shorter courses of one to twelve weeks.

There are also ten study centres throughout the country maintained by national associations representing various political, cultural and ideological opinions. These provide opportunities for further study in the field of general education, generally through study circles. These circles receive financial support from the state on condition that they have at least five members of or above the age of fifteen and meet at least ten times for a minimum total of 209 hours. The materials for these periods are provided by the parent study centre and foreign languages, including English, are among the most popular subjects for study. In 1982-83 there were 25,905 study circles attended by 231,387 students. Study centres also organize short courses; in 1982-83 7,552 such courses were attended by 199,602 students.

A number of these centres also offer correspondence courses and learners can enter for all the formal examinations of the state education system as well as study aspects of vocational education or subjects of their own interest. In all there are some 30,000 learners following correspondence courses from the different associations. One of the best known of these, the Society for Popular Culture, offers English courses of eighteen different types and levels. These were being followed by 302 students, or 8% of the total number of registered students, during the academic year 1984-85.

The Language Programmes section of the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) produces programmes of relevance both to pupils at school and adult students. The courses are multimedia combining TV, radio and print. Course cassettes are also usually available. At the end of each main course it is normally possible for learners to take an examination arranged by the Joint Examining Board for Adult Education and organized in co-operation with the education authorities and the Institutes of Adult Education. Approximately 32% of language programme transmission time is devoted to English. Take It Easy, now in its fourth year, has been the major English language production of recent years but there have been repeats of previous series as well and the Sarina Project has proved popular. In 1984 a first attempt was made to broaden output to include aspects of teacher training and a three-part series was produced covering suggestopaedia and the use of video in the language classroom. While directed primarily at classroom teachers the programmes were also of wider interest to parents in that they demonstrated some of the trends beginning to influence teaching in the state system.

Teacher training

The reform of teacher education in Finland has been in progress since 1975 and the situation is very complex.

Class teachers, who teach all of the subjects included in the curriculum of the first six years of the basic school, are trained in twelve teacher training institutes around the country. These come under the overall jurisdiction of the eight universities with Faculties of Education.

Subject teachers, who usually teach one or two subjects in the top three classes of the basic school and in the three classes of the upper secondary school, are graduates who have completed an extended degree of 180 credits, as opposed to the usual 160, after electing to specialize in education within their degree programme.

The teacher education network also includes thirteen state-maintained practice schools (normaalikoulu) which provide facilities for arranging both teaching practice and research. They cover the full range of classes in both the basic and the upper secondary school; the schools form part of the teacher education units of the institutions of higher education.

Teachers at vocational institutions form a very heterogeneous group in both their professional duties and educational background and there is great variety in their training. In principle, however, teachers of general subjects are expected to exhibit the same competence as teachers at the basic and upper secondary school levels.

At school level the National Board of General Education is responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring teaching throughout the country and for training regional advisors, of which there are some fifty for the English language. In-service training for teachers has been devolved to the provincial governments and training may be offered on the basis of a school level, a school district, an individual school or a specific subject. The teachers collective bargaining agreement currently allows for three compulsory days of training at the basic and upper-secondary school levels. Voluntary training can also be undertaken at the university departments of education and also during the various universities referred to above.

The Chief Inspector for Modern Languages based in Helsinki at the National Board of Schools and his colleague of the same title at the National Board of Vocational Education are alone responsible for the 'inspection' of English in their respective areas. Within the general school system it is the responsibility of the regional advisors to monitor local teacher performance and draw the attention of the Chief Inspector to any short-comings.

At the school level it is the responsibility of the National Board to draw up detailed syllabuses for each subject and also to provide guidelines on how these are to be interpreted.

3. TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

In the 1970s there was a shortage of both basic and upper-secondary school teachers but in the 1980s falling pupil rolls have led to a reduced need for teachers. As a result there has been some reduction in the number of places being made available for trainee teachers.

The Association of Teachers of English in Finland was founded in 1948 and today has some 3,000 members making it the largest association within the Finnish Foreign Language Teachers' Association (SUKOL). The Association aims to further the teaching of English in Finland and this includes arranging training programmes for teachers in co-operation with various organizations both inside and outside Finland and awarding scholarships to enable members to improve their language and teaching skills.

A Suggestopaedia Association was founded in 1982 to bring together people with interests in suggestopedia and related approaches. This approach has proved

very popular in Finland and the Association encourages international contact by organizing seminars and training sessions as well as producing teaching materials. Three bulletins are sent to members each year.

The Finnish Language Laboratory Association with 360 members was founded in the late 1960s and aims to offer information on the latest developments in this area through seminars and membership bulletins. There are two main meetings each year, one in the autumn and the other in the spring.

The Finnish Association of Applied Linguistics (AFinLA) was founded in 1970 and has more than 400 members. It aims to act as a forum for linguists, language teachers, psychologists, sociologists and all others interested in applied linguistics. The Association also arranges symposia, conferences, lectures, meetings and courses as well as acting as the local contact organization for AILA.

Every twelve to eighteen months there is a two-day conference of the Departments of English from the universities and each year the staff of the language centres organize a weekend 'oral skills' meeting to discuss common problems.

There are also annual symposia attended by members of the Departments of English throughout the country for the discussion of current research projects. The most recent of these was held at Lammi in October 1985 and consisted of four work groups looking at aspects of the following topics: research into the teaching and learning of English, research into literature and style, research into text linguistics and discourse analysis, research into syntax.

There are considerable numbers of native speakers working at the tertiary level both in the main departments of languages and also in the language centres and departments of translation studies. There are almost no native speakers at the school level, except those few involved in the organization of so-called club activities, as Finnish law allows only Finnish nationals to hold teaching positions at this level.

There are many native-speakers working in the private sector and some of these are also able to undertake some teaching in the language centres. Since 1985 it has been possible for non-Finnish nationals to become members of the trade union Tekerä but it remains to be seen what long-term effects this will have on individual qualifications and employer practice.

4. MATERIALS SUPPORT

Finland has no shortage of quality textbooks for English language teaching and there is a large variety of teaching material available at all levels with the exception of the vocational sector where new courses need to be developed to cater for the many new specializations being introduced in the course of this area's major reform.

All materials for use in schools must be approved by the Office of School Materials within the two boards. In English this restriction does not generally apply to supplementary material such as games and simplified readers; it does mean, however, that British publishers have little possibility of marketing a main course-book as the costs involved in making any changes necessary to meet the requirements of the Finnish system are likely to be prohibitive in such a restricted sales area.

In Helsinki there is a Textbook Committee for the city of Helsinki Basic Schools whose members represent all subjects and are elected by their fellow teachers. The task of the committee is to keep up with developments in textbooks and ensure that teachers have opportunities to familiarize themselves with what is available so that they can make informed decisions when purchasing. The committee also aims to provide the publishing houses with feedback on those materials in use so that they can influence their future development.

An interesting development in the last couple of years has been the work of a project group producing materials in English and mathematics for use in Namibian refugee comprehensive schools. This is a joint venture between Otava (one of the main publishing houses in Finland), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and SWAPO. Two teachers and two illustrators from Namibia have been living and working in Finland on this project under the guidance and direction of their Finnish colleagues and the first book in the series for English was published in the last spring of 1985.

Wide use is made of the services provided by the British Council Library which stocks a good supply of 16 mm films, video-cassettes, tapes and slides. The library is also able to offer posters and other representational material on Britain through the support of the British Travel Association in Stockholm and the local British Airways office.

5. EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN RELATION TO ENGLISH TEACHING

The supreme authority in educational administration in Finland is the Ministry of Education. For the past nine years there have been two ministers responsible for education and culture assisted by the permanent under-secretary (the highest permanent official). The Ministry is divided into six departments: General Department, Department of International Relations, School Department, Department of Higher Education and Research (including a bureau for teacher training), Department of Arts and a Department for Youth and Sports.

Subordinate to the Ministry are the two central offices - the National Board of General Education and the National Board of Vocational Education. The National Board of General Education manages and supervises basic and secondary education, some teacher training, adult education and libraries. The National Board of Vocational Education controls all aspects of vocational education directly.

Each of the eleven provincial governments has a school department responsible for the monitoring and guidance of general and adult education and also libraries. Some of the state's administrative responsibilities for schools are delegated to these authorities.

The Department of Higher Education and Research is responsible for the general administration of all institutions of higher education and is not dependent on an additional administrative organization between itself and the institutions. Advisory bodies attached to the Ministry are: the Council for School Affairs, the National Council for Higher Education and the National Council for Teacher Training.

As in many countries, the early history of education in Finland is closely connected with the Church. The first schools, begun in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, were attached to cathedrals and the Reformation interrupted and delayed educational development.

Major moves were made in the seventeenth century: the first university was founded in Turku in 1649, the first secondary school in 1649, and the first proposals for the organization of general education were made by Bishop Gezelius in 1683. Until the mid-nineteenth century all post-primary education was in Swedish hands and the first Finnish-language secondary school, opened in 1858, was the result of private initiative. This led to the setting up of associations to promote Finnish secondary education and by 1880 half the students at the University of Helsinki were Finnish speaking.

In 1983 the Compulsory School Founding Act was passed by which each district was required to set up a primary school wherever as many as 309 pupils could be enrolled. In 1921 came the law on Compulsory School Attendance laying down an eight-year period of compulsory education consisting of six years at a primary level and two further years. An optional extra year was added in 1962. This became compulsory with the introduction, over the years 1972-77, of the basic school based on the School System Act of 1968.

Five-year plans (subject, however, to annual revision) are drafted by the Ministry of Education and the two National Boards. Decisions on the implementation of aspects of the plans are taken annually when the State Budget is prepared for Parliamentary approval.

Current language planning policy is based on the programme approved by the Cabinet at the beginning of 1985 and drafted by the special Language Programme Committee referred to in Section 1 paragraph 3 above. The committee based its recommendations on research carried out in the 1970s and on the advice of leading experts in the field. In addition there was a seminar on language policy attended by language teachers from all types of school and by representatives from the universities, school administration and professional organizations. There was also public debate in the press and other media.

The basic intention behind the recommendations has been the offering of a wider choice of languages and some restructuring of the administration to allow the planning and implementation of the language programme to be the responsibility of local municipalities although still within an overall provincial and national framework. The result, however, has been a reduction in the number of hours available, particularly in the A-language (predominantly English), which has met with a great deal of opposition from the professional organizations.

In April 1985 a new language research centre was founded at the University of Jyväskylä with the initial task of co-ordinating the research efforts of the different departments in the university concerned with the teaching and learning of both foreign languages and the mother tongue. Future plans, however, suggest the establishment of several research positions to enable the centre to concentrate on a number of issues including the following:

language instruction in vocational schools

language proficiency evaluation and the development of testing methods

the acquisition and development of the ability to read

special problems in the teaching and learning of French, German and Russian

the development of a general language plan based on the need for various language skills in Finland.

7. ENGLISH OUTSIDE THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

There is a network of Finnish-British Societies and English Clubs throughout the country, the oldest being the Helsinki Society which celebrates its sixtieth anniversary in 1986. Many of these organizations are now loosely linked in a Federation of Finnish-British Societies which organizes an annual conference and is also responsible for the recruitment of the native-speaker teacher-secretaries who work for the most part on nine-month contracts. The majority of courses offered by these societies are general English but some of the more enterprising societies either hire out their teacher to local companies or actually try to attract more specialized groups. A number of companies have also traditionally recruited teachers and several of these are also affiliated to the Federation. Since 1984 the Federation has co-operated with the National Board of General Education in organizing an essay competition for pupils in the first year of the upper-secondary school.

The number of private language schools in Helsinki has grown steadily so that there are now some thirty in the greater city area and schools are also now opening in some of the larger provincial towns such as Jyväskylä, Lahti, Tampere and Turku. Most of these are strongly directed to the commercial and business community and in some cases offer translation services as well as language courses. Among the schools based in Helsinki are the following:

AAC-Opisto
BTC Kielikeskus Oy
C-Center Oy
EF Institute
The English Centre
Habil Oy
Inlingua
Linguarama

Eurocentres also have an office providing information on their language courses in England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the United States while Linguaphone also have a representation and sales office.

There is no system of inspection or recognition for these private establishments but the activities of the private education sector generally were the subject of a working party enquiry in 1982 and 1983. Although the report on the enquiry made no recommendation for the introduction of a legal framework to control this sector of education it was made clear that this was nevertheless an option to fall back on if those involved in private education did not to keep their customers satisfied. The possibility since 1985 for non-Finnish teachers to join a trade union is a major step forward.

Outside the general school system, five foreign-language schools in the capital offer schooling from kindergarten level. The English School, run by a Roman Catholic order of American nuns, offers basically the same curriculum as the main state system. Although teaching is mainly through the medium of English in the early years, there is a gradual shift towards Finnish as the course progresses. The only school teaching solely in English is the small International School catering mainly for the children of the

foreign and diplomatic communities (but see Section 2 paragraph 1 above). The school offers an Anglo-American curriculum for children between the ages of five and thirteen.

8. BRITISH SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

There is no Direct Teaching of English Operation in Finland. Since October 1978, however, the post of Assistant Representative has been held by English Language Qualified Officers with approximately 60% of the post-holder's time devoted to the support of English language teaching. There are many native speakers of varying nationalities concerned with the teaching of English and further details are contained in Section 3 above.

In recent years the main areas of activity have been as follows:

support to the National Board of General Education with the implementation of the new communicative curriculum through the provision of Specialist Tourists to attend and participate in regional conferences and visit the university teacher training departments;

provision of travel grants to enable leading British practitioners to attend relevant conferences and symposia;

establishment of a regular programme of summer schools in Finland for basic and upper-secondary school teachers, teachers in the adult education sector, and university language centre lecturers;

support for the teaching of literature through seminars, specialist tourists and travel grants;

support for the Finnish universities' own summer schools in CALL through the provision of specialist tourists and travel grants;

support for the Finnish-British Societies through the provision of an annual training seminar for the teacher secretaries;

maintenance of an ELT and audio-visual section within the library for the use of teachers of English and the establishment of a simplified readers section which has proved very popular and successful;

provision of information to British publishers and representatives of private language schools either by post in response to queries or in person during a fact-finding tour.

As far as British materials are concerned, very little is used in the basic and upper-secondary schools apart from simplified readers and other material which can be considered non-core to the main syllabus. The universities and private language schools, however, use a wide range of British produced materials and both Akateeminen Kirjakauppa (the Academic Bookshop) and Suomalainen Kirjakauppa in Helsinki and their subsidiary branches in the provinces keep stocks of these available. Series such as the Bellcrest File, Sadrina Project and Bid For Power are popular in some centres but the expense of such materials prevents their wider use.

9. AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

There is an American Center in Helsinki with an extensive library from which teachers can both borrow books and receive free publications, including maps and posters, for classroom use.

The Centre has on occasion, although less frequently than the British Council, provided travel grants for American experts to take part in seminars and conferences.

The Chairwoman of the Finnish Association of Teachers of English was invited to the United States with other senior education officials on an extensive study tour during the summer of 1985.

Each year there are a number of visiting Fulbright scholars: in 1985-86, for example, an expert in computational linguistics at the University of Tampere and an expert in literature at the University of Tampere.

The student-exchange programme with the United States is flourishing at the upper-secondary school level and its effects are noticeable when visiting such classes. Sometimes as many as 50% in a class will speak with a strongly marked American accent in stark contrast with the British accents on most tape-recordings used within schools and by most teachers. The increased availability is only likely to strengthen this drift towards a trans-Atlantic accent among the young.

10. OTHER AGENCY SUPPORT

See Section 4 paragraph 4 above.

11. COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

There is a great deal of interest in seminars and courses held in Britain both among pupils, students and teachers/lecturers at all levels of the education system. The school market is, however, to a large extent already in the hands of EF, Tjaereborg, Finnmatkat and Euro-Centres. Organizations offering more specialized courses, particularly those directed towards teachers, may well achieve more success, but Finns do tend to be conservative and appear to prefer to remain with those who have proved their worth in the past rather than risk something new. Organizations prepared to visit the country on a regular basis to make themselves known are likely to stand a greater chance of breaking into the market although the numbers involved will not be great as the total population is small (4.8 million).

Reference has been made to books in other sections of this profile (see in particular Sections 1 and 4). Finland is similarly well supplied with educational hardware of local or Nordic manufacture and the opportunities for British products are limited. There is some slight possibility, however, that the two National Boards will eventually be interested in some sort of agreement on the purchase of educational computer software.

Opportunities for British examinations were covered under Section 2.

12. CREATIVE WRITING

Reference has already been made in Section 1 to the use of English in newspapers and other publications. English is not used as a literary medium but every two years there is an international writers' reunion held in Mukkula near Lahti and attended on average by fifty authors from both East and West. The twelfth of these meetings took place in the summer of 1985 and was attended by Malcolm Bradbury.

13. CURRENT RESEARCH

Postgraduate studies in Finland have traditionally been composed of two degrees, the so-called licentiate and the doctorate. The licentiate, which included the requirement to prepare an extensive thesis, was a prerequisite for obtaining a doctorate. Under the new system, however, a doctorate may now be obtained without having first to obtain the licentiate. In addition to carrying out extended independent research work a postgraduate student is expected to gain familiarity with other people's research in the same field of study and with the general theoretical background. Most research students in the field of English studies need to spend some time in Britain as facilities are limited within Finland. This is mainly related to the smallness of the population which means there are generally very few scholars concentrating on similar fields of research.

The University of Helsinki has particular interests in Middle English Studies. Dr Michael Benskin visited in November 1984 to participate in a seminar on this theme. Mrs Irma Taavitsainen was awarded a grant-in-aid in September 1985 to continue her research into Middle English literary texts and continues to be in regular contact with Professor Michael Samuels at the University of Glasgow.

The University of Jyväskylä is the only institution offering a degree course in linguistics and has also been a regular organizer of summer schools in linguistics under the guidance of Professor Kari Sajavaara. The 1985 summer school was attended by Professor Suzanne Romaine who gave a series of ten lectures on the theme of language variation and language change.

The University of Oulu has, under the direction of Professor Heikki Nyyssonen, a particular interest in discourse analysis, an approach which has proved very popular in other centres too and has a strong following.

At the recent research symposium of the Departments of English, referred to in section 3 above, the topics under discussion included the following:

An alternative interpretation of Free Fall (Un) predictability:
implications for discourse

Abstraction levels in student essays

Textual parameters of adverbial placement in subordinate clauses

An X classification of English adverbials

Some problems concerning the textual functions of Old English

Paragraph patterns in student compositions

Moral and structure in some novels of Joseph Conrad

The structure of noun phrases in the texts of Sir Thomas Moore

Finnish presentations at the Second Nordic Conference for English Studies at Helsinki in May 1983 included the following:

Continuity and variation in Old English psalm glosses

Speech rate and quality of vowels in English and Finnish

What happens in conversation?

An aspect of term-formation in engineering English

Stickers, shifters and others: aspects of dialect space

The preterite and the perfect in BBC news bulletins: the case for a text linguistic approach

Cohesion and coherence in short expository essays

Towards a description of argumentative text structure

Simplified and abridged texts: what happens to content and sentence structure?

Macbeth and the folktale 'The Fisher and His Wife'.

The two most recent theses to appear which were developed with British Council support were:

'Distinctive features and English consonants: a study of five British English fricatives' by Timo Lauttamus from the University of Joensuu in 1984.

'Context effects on the processing of English as a foreign language' by Jorma Tommola from the University of Turku in 1985.

British Council Fellowships were awarded to two English scholars for the academic year 1985-86, one to carry out post-doctoral research into discourse analysis from the point of view of systemic linguistics at the University of Nottingham and the Polytechnic of Wales and the other to pursue the practice and theory of translation at the University of Surrey.

For the academic year 1986-87 a further two fellowships will be awarded, one for psycholinguistics and the other for research into Samuel Beckett.

14. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

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15. GENERAL STATEMENT

The various reforms which have taken place in recent years and which are still continuing in some areas of the education system have caused problems and crises of confidence for many teachers. However, the worst effects of this period of change now seem to be over and there is a sense of openness and vibrancy at most gatherings of teachers and their colleagues in the administration. New ideas are being considered, and in many cases experimented with and accepted, so that the current atmosphere is both positive and receptive.